



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV
SUBJECT: **Mater Academy of Nevada**
Request to Amend Mission and Vision Statement
DATE: July 30, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Mater Academy of Nevada (Mater) is requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption request and approve the change to the school's Mission and Vision Statements. Mater Academy, which first opened in Florida in 1998, recently presented a new mission and vision statement as part of their 2020-2021 Strategic Plan. Mater Academy of Nevada, as an affiliate school of the original Florida model, is seeking to adopt this new mission and vision.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the school's request for a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school's amendment proposals.

Background

Mater opened their first campus, Mountain Vista, in August of 2014 serving grades K-5. Today this campus serves 1,049 students in grades K-8 and is currently led by Principal Olivia Carbajal. For the 2020-2021 school year, nearly 77% of students are Hispanic/Latino, nearly 40% are English Language Learners, and nearly all students are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, per the Validation Day data.

Mater opened their second campus, Bonanza, in August of 2017 serving students in grades K-8. This campus, led by Principal Amy Gronna, serves 1,071 students, of which nearly 85% are Hispanic/Latino, nearly 34% are English Language Learners, and nearly all students are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, per the Validation Day data.

Mater opened their third campus, Las Vegas East, this school year which is led by Principal Renee Fairless, serving grades K-9 with plans to expand to grades K-12. This campus serves 1,143 students, of which over 75% are Hispanic/Latino, over 40% are English Language Learners, and nearly all students are Free and Reduced Lunch eligible. These three schools are governed by a 7-member Board of Directors from diverse backgrounds.

The current mission statement for Mater is as follows:

“The mission of Mater Academy of Nevada is to provide an innovative, challenging, multi-cultural education, preparing students to be global citizens and have a competitive edge in the 21st century workforce.”

The current vision statement is:

“The vision of Mater Academy of Nevada is to develop successful scholars with 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Students will be college and career ready with cross-cultural competence.”

Starting in July of 2020, principals from all schools began work on developing new mission and vision statements as part of Mater’s strategic plan.

The new mission statement is:

“Mater provides a safe learning environment where Academics are facilitated by Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community which enables students to become confident, self-directed learners in a technology rich college preparatory environment through, Rigor, Relevance, Relationships.”

The new vision statement is:

“Mater provides exemplary educational choices by offering an innovative college preparatory curriculum; empowering confident leaders of tomorrow.”

These changes to the mission and vision statements will have no impact on the makeup of the student body served, the academic program, or school operations.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

Existing charter schools that are sponsored by the SPCSA may submit a charter school contract amendment application to the SPCSA – which is reviewed by SPCSA staff and presented for SPCSA Board action – in order to, among other things, increase enrollment, add grade levels above and beyond what the charter school is approved to serve, add a new campus, or change mission and vision statements.

Only those existing charter schools that are meeting expectations in regards to academics (under both the Department of Education’s Nevada School Performance Framework – the “Star Ratings” – and the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework), are compliant in regard to the SPCSA’s Organizational Framework, and are fiscally sound may be approved for expansion. Furthermore, the academic, organizational, and financial performance of other charter schools that contract with the same Charter Management Organization or Educational Management Organization are taken into account when reviewing an expansion application.¹

At this time, SPCSA staff finds that Mater is meeting expectations in regard to academic expectations, are compliant in regard to the SPCSA’s Organization Framework, and are fiscally sound.

Eligibility, Analysis, Summary and Recommendation

Mater Academy of Nevada has demonstrated consistent improvement in their elementary grades and consistent high performance in their middle school grades. The most recent Nevada State Performance Framework ratings for Mater Mountain Vista was 4-stars (80.5 index score) for the elementary school and 5-stars (91.5 index score) for the middle school. For Mater Bonanza these ratings were 3-stars (52.0 index score) and 4-stars (78.3 index score) respectively. Mater East has not been open long enough to receive a star rating and due to COVID-19 there were no star ratings issued for the 19-20 school year.

¹ There are limited exceptions to these eligibility requirements for those charter schools that have been approved by the State Board of Education and the SPCSA Board to be rated under Nevada’s Alternative Performance Framework.

The school is in good standing on both the Organizational and Financial Performance Frameworks. This amendment will not make changes to the school’s successful academic program, will not impact their high performing organizational structure, or impact their healthy financial position. What it will achieve is to bring consistency between the Mission and Vision of the local school, Mater Academy of Nevada, and the national organization, Mater Academy.

For these reasons, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve a change to the Mission and Vision Statements for Mater Academy of Nevada.

Proposed Motion:

Grant Mater Academy of Nevada a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request to change their Mission and Vision statements as stated in this memo.

Mater Academy of Nevada Star Rating, Grade Structure, Historical Enrollment, and Demographics

Year	NSPF Rating
2020 ²	Mountain Vista Campus elementary: 4 stars Mountain Vista Campus middle: 5 stars Bonanza Campus elementary: 3 stars Bonanza Campus middle: 4 stars
2019	Mountain Vista Campus elementary: 4 stars Mountain Vista Campus middle: 5 stars Bonanza Campus elementary: 3 stars Bonanza Campus middle: 4 stars
2018	Mountain Vista Campus elementary: 3 stars Mountain Vista Campus middle: 4 stars Bonanza Campus elementary: 1 star Bonanza Campus middle: 3 stars
2017	Elementary: 2 stars Middle: 3 stars
2016	No Star Ratings published by the Nevada Department of Education
2015	Elementary: Not Rated (new school) Middle: Not Rated (new school)

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2019 – 20 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, for the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings

**School Total Enrollment and Demographics
Mater Mountain Vista**

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
20-21	1,049	1.8%	9.4%	7.3%	76.7%	0.1%	4.0%	0.3%	8.6%	38.6%	>95%
19-20	1,060	1.6%	9.0%	7.1%	77.4%	0.2%	4.1%	0.8%	8.1%	35.9%	>95%
18-19	1,056	1.2%	7.8%	8.1%	78.6%	0.2%	3.6%	0.5%	8.4%	46%	>95%
17-18	996	0.8%	9.0%	10.2%	75.5%	.01%	4.3%	0.0%	8.3%	47.4%	62.9%

Mater Bonanza

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
20-21	1,071	0.5%	7.6%	4.1%	84.6%	0.3%	1.8%	0.7%	9.7%	33.9%	>95%
19-20	1,041	0.6%	8.9%	6.4%	81.1%	0.2%	1.7%	1.1%	8.5%	36.1%	>95%
18-19	906	0.9%	9.3%	7.8%	78.6%	0.3%	2.4%	0.7%	8.9%	43.3%	86.0%
17-18	760	1.1%	9.5%	9.2%	77.5%	0.4%	2.1%	0.3%	6.8%	52.2%	80.3%

Mater East

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
20-21	1,143	0.6%	12.7%	5.2%	76.9%	0.0%	3.4%	0.7%	9%	42.6%	>95%